





# THE MAN-EATING LIONS OF TSAVO

BY

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D. C. DAVIES, DIRECTOR

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
CHICAGO, U.S.A.





THE MAN-EATERS AS SHOWN IN THE GROUP IN FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY.

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

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LEAFLET

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## The Man-Eating Lions of Tsavo\*

When the visitor to the Field Museum pauses before the life-like forms of the Tsavo man-eaters, it will be hard for him to realize that these two ferocious brutes killed and devoured, under the most appalling circumstances, one hundred and thirty-five Indian and African artisans and laborers employed in the construction of the Uganda Railway. For over nine months these insatiable monsters carried on an intermittent warfare against the Railway and all those connected with it in the neighborhood of Tsavo. This culminated in a regular "reign of terror" when they finally succeeded in bringing the railway works for a time to a complete standstill.

A late great President of the United States, that man with the wonderful personality—Theodore Roosevelt—has put it on record that "the story of the Man-Eaters of Tsavo is by far the most remarkable account of which we have any record;" while that veteran big

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\*This leaflet, prepared by Col. J. H. Patterson, recounts the main events of his remarkable experiences with man-eating lions previously told at greater length in his well-known book "The Man-Eaters of Tsavo." In 1924, Col. Patterson delivered a public lecture in the Field Museum. At that time he remarked to President Stanley Field, of the Museum, that he still possessed the skins of the famous killers of men. As a result, they were purchased by Mr. Field and presented to the Museum. With considerable difficulty, owing to the age of the skins, they were mounted and are now permanently preserved in the spirited group shown in the accompanying illustration.

game hunter and African pioneer, Selous, who was himself killed in Africa, not far from Tsavo, wrote as follows:—

“No lion story that I ever heard or read equals in its long sustained dramatic interest the story of the man-eaters of Tsavo. It is an epic of terrible tragedies spread out over several months and only at last brought to an end by the resource and determination of one man.”

These remarkable lions had the distinction, probably unique among wild animals, of being specifically referred to in the British Parliament by the Prime Minister of the day, the Marquis of Salisbury, who in apologizing for the delay in the construction of the Uganda Railway said:—

“The whole of the works were put to a stop because a pair of man-eating lions appeared in the locality and conceived a most unfortunate taste for our workmen. At last the labourers entirely declined to carry on unless they were guarded by iron entrenchments. Of course it is difficult to work a railway under these conditions and until we found an enthusiastic sportsman to get rid of these lions our enterprise was seriously hindered.”

#### WORK BEGINS AT TSAVO.

When I landed at Mombasa, I fully expected to encounter many trials and hardships while engaged in building the railway through an inhospitable and savage territory. I anticipated engineering difficulties, perils from sunstroke and fevers, a possible scarcity of food and water,—but never for a moment did I realize that the African wilderness held in its mysterious recesses two prowling demons who looked upon myself and my workmen as a sort of manna sent down from Heaven for their special delectation. All other difficulties were as nothing compared to the terrible toll



of human sacrifice exacted nightly by these savage monsters who made Tsavo their headquarters and gave to that district an evil repute which lasts to this day.

Mombasa, the starting point of the Uganda Railway, is an old Arab city fringed with palms and washed by the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. Up to the time of my arrival in tropical Africa, I had pictured to myself a desolate shore, sandy, rock-strewn, with a scorching sun burning up everything beneath it, but my first view of Mombasa gave me a pleasant surprise. Green verdure abounded far as the eye could reach, while dazzlingly white, flat-roofed houses peeped out between tall cocoanut and spreading mango trees, waving palms and huge baobabs, forming a most delightful and beautiful picture, framed against a dark background of well-wooded verdant hills. The old town was bathed in brilliant sunshine and was reflected dreamily in the motionless sea.

At the time of my arrival, railhead had just reached Tsavo, about one hundred and thirty miles from the coast. Here it was found that a river, fed from the everlasting snows of Mount Kilimanjaro, surged across the track. The river ran in the center of a wide and deep depression, worn away in the course of ages, and this rift had to be spanned by means of a bridge. I was deputed to build this bridge and to carry out all the engineering works in the district.

After spending a few days at Mombasa, I set out for my headquarters. For twenty miles or so after leaving the coast, the railway wound steadily upwards through beautifully wooded, park-like country, and, on looking back out of the carriage window, I could every now and then obtain lovely views of Mombasa, while beyond the Indian Ocean sparkled in the glorious sunshine as far as the eye could reach. Soon, however, the whole character of the country changed. Green, smiling, well-wooded uplands gave place to a wilder-

ness covered with bushy scrub and stunted trees, and carpeted with a layer of fine red dust which penetrated into every nook and cranny. Towards dusk we reached Tsavo and I felt somewhat depressed by the desolation and loneliness of my new surroundings. I slept that night in a little palm hut which had been built by some previous traveller, and which was fortunately unoccupied for the time being. It was rather broken-down and dilapidated, not even possessing a door, and as I lay on my narrow camp bed I could see the stars twinkling through the broken roof. I little knew then what adventures awaited me in this neighborhood; and, if I had realized that at that very time two savage brutes were prowling round, seeking whom they might devour, I hardly think I should have slept so peacefully.

The next morning I was up betimes, eager to make acquaintance with my new surroundings. My first impression on coming out of the hut was that I was hemmed in on all sides with a dense growth of impenetrable jungle; on scrambling to the top of a little hill close at hand, I found that the whole country as far as I could see was covered with low, stunted trees, thick undergrowth and "wait-a-bit" thorns. The only clearing, indeed, appeared to be where the narrow track for the railway had been cut. This interminable *nyika*, or wilderness of whitish and leafless dwarf trees, presented a ghastly and sun-stricken appearance; here and there a ridge of dark-red, heat-blistered rock jutted out above the jungle, and added its rugged barrenness to the dreariness of the picture. Away to the north-east stretched the unbroken line of the N'dungu Escarpment, while far off to the south I could just catch a glimpse of the snow-capped top of towering Kilimanjaro. The one redeeming feature of the neighborhood was the river from which Tsavo takes its name; this is a swiftly-flowing stream, always cool and

always running, the latter being an exceptional attribute in this part of East Africa. The fringe of lofty green trees along its banks formed a welcome relief to the general monotony of the landscape. When I had thus obtained a rough idea of the neighborhood, I returned to my hut, and began in earnest to make preparations for my stay in this outlandish place. The stores were unpacked, and my "boys" pitched my tent in a little clearing close to the shelter where I had slept the night before and not far from the main camp.

Railhead had at this time just reached the western side of the river, and some thousands of Indian coolies and other workmen were encamped there. As the line had to be pushed on with all speed, a diversion had been made and the river crossed by means of a temporary bridge. My principal work was to erect the permanent structure, and to complete all the other works for a distance of thirty miles on each side of Tsavo. I accordingly made a survey of what had to be done, and sent my requisition for labor, tools and material to the headquarters at Kilindini. Of course the natives of this part of Africa knew nothing about technical work, or indeed work of any kind save carrying a load on the head, so the great majority of our artisans and laborers had to be imported from India. In a short time workmen and supplies came pouring in, and the noise of hammers and sledges, drilling and blasting, echoed merrily throughout the district.

#### THE FIRST VICTIMS.

Unfortunately this happy state of affairs did not continue for long, and our work was soon interrupted in a rude and startling manner. I had been only a few days at Tsavo when one or two workmen mysteriously disappeared and I was told that they had been carried off from their tents and devoured by lions. At the time I did not credit this story and thought it much

more likely that the unfortunate men were the victims of foul play. They happened to be very good workmen and had saved a fair number of rupees, so I thought it quite likely that some scoundrels from the gangs had murdered them for the sake of their money. This suspicion, however, was very soon dispelled.

I was aroused at dawn one morning by a man who came rushing to my tent to tell me that one of my *jemadars*—a fine, powerful Sikh named Ungan Singh—had been seized during the night and carried off by a huge lion. I immediately caught up my rifle and ran to the spot to find out if the man's story was correct, but the moment I reached the workers' camp I found ample evidence that the gruesome tale was all too true. The lion's "pug" marks were plainly visible in the sand, while the furrows made by the heels of the unfortunate victim showed the direction in which he had been dragged away. Moreover one of the workmen had actually witnessed the whole occurrence which he quaintly and graphically described.

"Sahib," he said, "I was awake and lying next to the *jemadar*, who was asleep, when a big lion put his head in at the open door. My heart turned to water when I saw him so near me, and I could not move. He first looked at me and then at Ungan Singh, and through the kindness of God he took the *jemadar* by the throat instead of your slave. The unfortunate one cried out '*Choro!*' (Let go!), and threw his arm up around the lion's neck, but the great beast dragged him from his bed and carried him off while I lay paralyzed with fear, listening to the terrible struggle which went on outside the tent door. The *jemadar* fought hard, but what chance had he? Was he not fighting with a lion?"

After hearing this vivid account of the tragedy, I at once set out to track the brute and in a short time came up to the spot where he had devoured the unfortunate *jemadar*. Here a dreadful spectacle presented



itself. The ground all about was covered with blood, morsels of flesh, and the larger bones, but the head was left intact, save for a couple of holes made by the lion's tusks. It was the most gruesome sight I had ever seen. It was evident from the marks all around that two lions had been there and had probably fought for possession of the body. I collected the remains as well as possible and buried them under a heap of stones—the horrified, staring eyes of the severed head seeming to watch me all the time, for I did not bury it, but took it back to camp for identification before the medical officer. Before returning I traced the lions for a considerable distance further along the river, but finally lost all trace of them on some hard rocky ground. This was my first experience of the man-eaters and I vowed then and there that I would spare no pains to rid the neighbourhood of the brutes. I little knew the trouble that was in store for me, or how narrow were to be my own escapes from sharing poor Ungan Singh's fate.

That same night I sat up in a tree close to the late *jemadar's* tent, hoping that the lions would return to it for another victim. I was followed to my perch by a few of the more terrified coolies, who begged to be allowed to sit up in the tree with me; all the other workmen remained in their tents, but no more doors were left open. I had with me my .303 and a 12-bore shotgun, one barrel loaded with ball and the other with slug. Shortly after settling down to my vigil, my hopes of bagging the brutes were raised by the sound of their ominous roaring coming closer and closer. Presently this ceased, and quiet reigned for an hour or two, as lions always stalk their prey in complete silence. All at once, however, we heard a great uproar and frenzied cries coming from another camp about half a mile away; we knew then that the lions had

seized a victim there, and that we should see or hear nothing further of them that night.

Next morning I found that one of the brutes had broken into a tent at Railhead Camp—whence we had heard the commotion during the night—and had made off with a poor wretch who was lying there asleep. After a night's rest, therefore, I took up my position in a suitable tree near this tent. I did not at all like the idea of walking the half-mile to the place after dark, but I felt fairly safe, for one of my men carried a bright lamp close behind me. He in his turn was followed by another leading a goat, which I tied under my tree in the hope that the lion might be tempted to seize it instead of a workman. A steady drizzle commenced shortly after I had settled down to my night of watching, and I was soon thoroughly chilled and wet. I stuck to my uncomfortable post however, hoping to get a shot, but I well remember the feeling of bitter disappointment experienced when about midnight I heard screams and cries and a heartrending shriek, which told me that the man-eaters had again eluded me and had claimed another victim elsewhere.

At this time the various camps of the workmen were very scattered, so the lions had a range of some eight miles on either side of Tsavo to work upon; and as their tactics seemed to be to break into a different camp each night, it was most difficult to forestall them. They appeared to have an extraordinary and uncanny faculty of finding out our plans beforehand, so that no matter in how likely or how tempting a spot we lay in wait for them, they invariably avoided that particular place and seized their victim for the night from some other camp.

Hunting them by day, moreover, in such a dense wilderness as surrounded us, was an exceedingly tiring and really foolhardy undertaking. In a thick jungle of the kind around Tsavo, the hunted animal has every

chance against the hunter, for however careful the latter may be, a dead twig or something of the sort is sure to crackle just at the critical moment and so give the alarm. Still I never gave up hope of some day finding their lair, and accordingly devoted all my spare time to crawling about through the undergrowth. Many a time when attempting to force my way through this bewildering tangle I had to be released by my gun-bearer from the fast clutches of the "wait-a-bit" thorns. Often with immense pains I succeeded in tracing the lions to the river after they had seized a victim, only to lose the trail from there onwards, owing to the rocky nature of the ground which they seemed to be careful to choose in retreating to their den.

At this early stage of the struggle, I am glad to say, the lions were not always successful in their efforts to capture a human being for their nightly meal, and one or two amusing incidents occurred to relieve the tension from which our nerves were beginning to suffer. On one occasion an enterprising *bunniah* (Indian trader) was riding along on his donkey late at night, when suddenly a lion sprang out on him, knocking over both man and beast. The donkey was badly wounded, and the lion was just about to seize the trader, when in some way or other his claws became entangled in a rope by which two empty kerosene tins were strung across the donkey's neck. The rattle and clatter made by these as he dragged them after him gave him such a fright that he turned tail and bolted off into the jungle, to the intense relief of the terrified *bunniah*, who quickly made his way up the nearest tree and remained there, shivering with fear, throughout the night.

Shortly after this episode, a Greek contractor named Themistocles Pappadimitrini had an equally marvellous escape. He was sleeping peacefully in his tent one night, when a lion broke in, and seized and

made off with the mattress on which he was lying. Though rudely awakened, the Greek was quite unhurt and suffered nothing worse than a bad fright. This same man, however, met with a melancholy fate not long afterwards. He had been to the Kilimanjaro district to buy cattle, and on the return journey attempted to take a short cut across country to the railway, but perished miserably of thirst on the way.

On another occasion fourteen coolies, who slept together in a large tent, were one night awakened by a lion's suddenly jumping upon the tent and breaking through it. The brute landed with one claw on a coolie's shoulder, which was badly torn; but, instead of seizing the man himself, in his hurry he grabbed a large bag of rice which happened to be lying in the tent, and made off with it, dropping it in disgust some little distance away when he realized his mistake.

These, however, were only the earlier efforts of the man-eaters. Later on, as will be seen, nothing flurried or frightened them in the least, and save as food they showed a complete contempt of human beings. Having once marked down a victim, they would allow nothing to deter them from securing him, whether he were protected by a thick fence, or inside a closed tent, or sitting round a brightly burning fire. Shots, shouting and firebrands they alike laughed at. Their methods became so uncanny and their man-stalking so well-timed and so certain of success that the workmen firmly believed that they were not real animals at all, but devils in lions' shape.

#### A MIDNIGHT ATTACK.

All this time I lived in a small tent with no protection of any kind round it, not yet fully realizing the terrible risk I ran. Late one afternoon a medical officer, Dr. Rose, arrived at Tsavo, and I gave him shelter in my quarters. During the night I was awak-



ened by something floundering about among my tent ropes. I shouted out "Who's there?" and this awoke Rose. I at once lit a lantern and we both went out to investigate but could see nothing, so we retired and slept soundly until daylight. In the morning imagine our feelings when we saw the huge "pug" marks of a lion around and around the tent! He had evidently intended to make a meal of one of us, but got entangled in the guy ropes while getting in position for a spring, and this fortunately frightened him away.

It was a very lucky escape for us, and, warned by this experience, I at once changed my quarters and moved to the other side of the river where I shared a hut with my friend, Dr. Brock, who was in medical charge of the district. It was constructed of palm leaves and boughs and was situated on the eastern side of the river, close to the old caravan route leading to Uganda. We had it surrounded by a circular *boma* or thorn fence, about seventy yards in diameter, well made, and thick and high. Our personal servants also lived within the enclosure, and a bright fire was always kept up throughout the night. For the sake of coolness, Brock and I used to sit out under the verandah of this hut in the evenings; but it was rather trying to our nerves to attempt to read or write there, as we never knew when a lion might spring over the *boma*, and be on us before we were aware. We therefore kept our rifles within easy reach, and cast many an anxious glance out into the inky darkness beyond the circle of firelight. On one or two occasions, we found in the morning that the lions had come quite close to the fence; but fortunately they never succeeded in getting through.

By this time, too, the camps of the workmen had also been surrounded by thorn fences; nevertheless the lions managed to jump over or to break through some one or other of these, and regularly every few

nights a man was carried off, the reports of the disappearance of this or that workman coming in to me with painful frequency. So long, however, as Railhead Camp—with its two or three thousand men, scattered over a wide area—remained at Tsavo, the coolies appeared not to take much notice of the dreadful deaths of their comrades. Each man felt, I suppose, that as the man-eaters had such a large number of victims to choose from, the chances of their selecting him in particular were very small. But when the large camp moved farther ahead, matters altered considerably. I was then left with only a few hundred men to complete the permanent works; and as all the remaining workmen were naturally camped together, the attentions of the lions became more apparent and made deeper impression. A regular panic consequently ensued, and it required all my powers of persuasion to induce the men to stay on. In fact, I succeeded in doing so only by allowing them to knock off all regular work until they had built exceptionally thick and high *bomas* round each camp. Within these enclosures fires were kept burning all night, and it was also the duty of the night-watchman to keep clattering half a dozen empty oil tins suspended from a convenient tree. These he manipulated by means of a long rope, while sitting in safety within his tent; and the frightful noise thus produced was kept up at frequent intervals during the night in the hopes of terrifying the man-eaters. In spite of all these precautions, however, the lions would not be denied, and men were nightly dragged out of their tents and devoured.

When the railhead workmen moved on, their hospital camp was left behind. It stood rather apart from the other camps, in a clearing about three-quarters of a mile from my hut, but was protected by a good thick fence and to all appearances was quite secure. It seemed, however, as if barriers were of no avail against





RAILWAY AND THORNY WILDERNESS NEAR TSAVO. (See p. 4.)



the "demons", for before very long one of them found a weak spot in the *boma* and broke through. On this occasion the Hospital Assistant had a marvellous escape. Hearing a noise outside, he opened the door of his tent and was horrified to see a great lion standing a few yards away looking at him. The beast made a spring toward him, which gave the Assistant such a fright that he jumped backwards, and in doing so luckily upset a box containing medical stores. This crashed down with such a loud clatter of breaking glass that the lion was startled for a moment and made off for another part of the enclosure. Here, unfortunately, he was more successful, as he jumped on to and broke through a tent in which eight patients were lying. Two of them were badly wounded in the melee which ensued, and one poor wretch was seized and dragged off bodily through the thorn fence. The two wounded coolies were left where they lay, a piece of torn tent having fallen over them; and in this position the doctor and I found them on our arrival soon after dawn. We at once decided to move the hospital closer to the main camp; a fresh site was prepared, a stout hedge built round the enclosure, and all the patients were moved in before nightfall.

I decided to sit up all night in the vacated *boma* in the hope of getting an opportunity of bagging one of them; but in the middle of my lonely vigil I had the mortification of hearing shrieks and cries coming from the direction of the new hospital, telling me only too plainly that our dreaded foes had once more eluded me. Hurrying to the place at daylight, I found that one of the lions had jumped over the newly erected fence and had carried off the hospital *bhisti* (water-carrier), and that several other coolies had been unwilling witnesses of the terrible scene which took place within the circle of light given by the big camp fire. The *bhisti*, it appears, had been lying on the floor,

with his head toward the center of the tent and his feet nearly touching the side. The lion managed to get its head in below the canvas, seized him by the foot and pulled him out. In desperation the unfortunate water-carrier clutched hold of a heavy box in a vain attempt to prevent himself being carried off, and dragged it with him until he was forced to let go by its being stopped by the side of the tent. He then caught hold of a tent rope and clung tightly to it until it broke. As soon as the lion managed to get him clear of the tent, he sprang at his throat and after a few vicious shakes the poor *bhisti's* agonized cries were silenced forever. The brute then took him in his mouth and, like a huge cat with a mouse, ran up and down the *boma*, looking for a weak spot to break through. This he presently found and plunged into, dragging his victim with him and leaving shreds of torn cloth and flesh as ghastly evidences of his passage through the thorns. Dr. Brock and I were easily able to follow his track, and soon found the remains about four hundred yards away in the bush. There was the usual horrible sight. Very little was left of the unfortunate *bhisti*—only the skull, the jaws, a few of the larger bones and a portion of the palm with one or two fingers attached. On one of these was a silver ring, and this, with the teeth (a relic much prized by certain castes), was sent to the man's widow in India.

Again it was decided to move the hospital and a still higher and stronger *boma* was built round the new site. The work was completed and all patients carried in before nightfall. As I knew that lions were in the habit of prowling round deserted camps, I asked my friend, Brock, to join me and watch for the man-eater near the vacated hospital enclosure. A railway track ran beside it, so I had a covered freight car shunted to the entrance and in this we took up our position at nightfall, sitting on a couple of boxes just

inside the open doorway. When I now think of the foolhardiness of this procedure, it makes me shudder, but at that time I did not realize the danger we ran or that the man-eater would be so audacious as to look upon us as a tempting tit-bit for his hungry maw.

I had put some cattle into the deserted hospital enclosure and left a few tents standing, so that the lions might be deceived and think that the patients were still within the *boma*. We sat in the car for a couple of hours in perfect silence enveloped in Stygian darkness, and then I plainly heard a dry stick snap. "The Man-Eater!" I whispered to Brock. A few minutes afterwards we heard a dull thud as if some heavy body had jumped over the *boma*. Then we heard the cattle running about. After that everything became still.

I now proposed to my companion that I should climb out of the car and lie on the ground, so as to get a better shot at the brute, if he should come in our direction with his prey; but Brock persuaded me to remain where I was and, thank God, I took his advice, for, at that very moment the lion was actually stalking us. After a short period of intense gazing into the darkness, I thought I saw something glide to a bush in front of us. In a whisper I asked Brock, "Did you see anything move?" but he made no reply, so I held my rifle in readiness and waited. Those two or three moments I shall never forget. I felt instinctively that the uncanny devil was stealing stealthily toward us and I even thought I could discern a form of some kind, but I feared to fire lest it should be only my imagination running away with me, and in that case I should merely frighten the man-eater away. The darkness and silence could almost be felt and for those few seconds the strain on my nerves was almost unendurable. Then—suddenly—a huge body sprang at us. "The lion!" I shouted, and both our shots rang

out simultaneously. The noise and flash of our rifles so terrified the brute that, instead of leaping right into the car, he turned in his spring, but he got so close to me that I felt the wipe of his paw across my face. If we had not been thoroughly on the alert, he would undoubtedly have got one of us. We fired a few more shots into the darkness in order to prevent a second attack, and then lit a lantern and, while I got out to close the door—trembling all the time lest the man-eater should grab me—Brock stood ready to shoot.

We had the luckiest escape that night that it is possible for man to experience. Only our keen vigilance and God's good providence saved one or both of us from an awful fate. Next morning we found Brock's bullet embedded in the sand, close to a footprint; it could not have missed the lion by more than an inch or two. Mine was nowhere to be found. Later on I found that my bullet had shot away one of the lion's tusks, as may be seen on examining the head.

#### THE LIONS HOLD UP THE RAILWAY.

The lions apparently got a very bad fright the night Brock and I gave them such a warm reception in the freight car, for they kept away from Tsavo and did not molest us in any way for some time. During the breathing space which they vouchsafed us, it occurred to me that, if they should renew their attacks, a trap would perhaps offer the best method of getting to grips with them, and if I could construct one in which a couple of coolies might be used as bait without being subjected to any danger, the lions would be quite daring enough to enter it in search of them and thus be caught. I accordingly set to work at once, and in a short time managed to make a sufficiently strong trap out of wooden sleepers, tram-rails, pieces of telegraph wire, and a length of heavy chain. It was divided into two compartments—one for the men



and one for the lion. A sliding door at one end admitted the former, and once inside this compartment they were perfectly safe, for between them and the lion, if he should attack them, ran a cross wall of iron rails only three inches apart, and embedded both top and bottom in heavy wooden sleepers. The door which was to admit the lion was, of course, at the opposite end of the structure, but otherwise the whole thing was very much on the principle of the ordinary rat-trap, except that it was not necessary for the lion to seize the bait in order to send the door clattering down. This part of the contrivance was arranged in the following manner. A heavy chain was secured along the top part of the lion's doorway, the ends hanging down to the ground on either side of the opening; and to these were fastened, strongly secured by stout wire, short lengths of rails placed about six inches apart. This made a sort of flexible door which could be packed into a small space when not in use, and which abutted against the top of the doorway when lifted up. The door was held in this position by a lever made of a piece of rail, which in turn was kept in its place by a wire fastened to one end and passing down to a spring concealed in the ground inside the cage. As soon as the lion entered sufficiently far into the trap, he would be bound to tread on the spring; his weight on this would release the wire, and in an instant down would come the door behind him; and he could not push it out in any way, as it fell through a groove between two rails firmly embedded in the ground.

In making this trap, which cost us a lot of work, we were rather at a loss for want of tools to bore holes in the rails for the doorway, so as to enable them to be fastened by the wire to the chain. It occurred to me, however, that a hard-nosed bullet from my .303 would penetrate the iron, and, on making the experi-

ment, I was glad to find that a hole was made as cleanly as if it had been punched out.

When the trap was ready, I pitched a tent over it in order further to deceive the lions, and built an exceedingly strong *boma* round it. One small entrance was made at the back of the enclosure for the men, which they were to close on going in by pulling a bush after them; and another entrance just in front of the door of the cage was left open for the lions. The wiseacres to whom I showed my invention were generally of the opinion that the man-eaters would be too cunning to walk into my parlour; but, as will be seen later, their predictions proved false. For the first few nights I baited the trap myself, but nothing happened except that I had a very sleepless and uncomfortable time, and was badly bitten by mosquitoes.

As a matter of fact, it was some months before the lions attacked us again, though from time to time we heard of their depredations in other quarters. Not long after our night in the freight car, two men were carried off from the railhead, while another was taken from a place called Engomani, about ten miles away. Within a short time, this latter place was again visited by the brutes, two more men being seized, one of whom was killed and eaten, and the other so badly mauled that he died within a few days. As I have said, however, we at Tsavo enjoyed complete immunity from attack, and the coolies, believing that their dreaded foes had permanently deserted the district, resumed all their usual habits and occupations, and life in the camps returned to its normal routine.

At last we were suddenly startled out of this feeling of security. One dark night the familiar terror-stricken cries and screams awoke the camps, and we knew that the "demons" had returned and had commenced a new list of victims. On this occasion a

number of men had been sleeping outside their tents for the sake of coolness, thinking, of course, that the lions had gone for good, when suddenly in the middle of the night one of the brutes was discovered forcing its way through the *boma*. The alarm was at once given, and sticks, stones and firebrands were hurled in the direction of the intruder. All was of no avail, however, for the lion burst into the midst of the terrified group, seized an unfortunate wretch amid the cries and shrieks of his companions, and dragged him off through the thick thorn fence. He was joined outside by the second lion, and so daring had the two brutes become that they did not trouble to carry their victim farther away, but devoured him within thirty yards of the tent where he had been seized. Although several shots were fired in their direction by the *jemadar* of the gang to which the coolie belonged, they took no notice of these and did not attempt to move until their horrible meal was finished. The few scattered fragments that remained of the body I would not allow to be buried at once, hoping that the lions would return to the spot the following night; on the chance of this I took up my station at nightfall in a convenient tree. Nothing occurred to break the monotony of my watch, however, except that I had a visit from a hyena, and the next morning I learned that the lions had attacked another camp about two miles from Tsavo—for by this time the camps were again scattered, as I had works in progress all up and down the line. There the man-eaters had been successful in obtaining a victim, whom, as in the previous instance, they devoured quite close to the camp. How they forced their way through the *bomas* without making a noise was, and still is, a mystery to me; I should have thought that it was next to impossible for an animal to get through at all. Yet they continually did so, and without a sound being heard.

After this occurrence, I sat up every night for over a week near likely camps, but all in vain. Either the lions saw me and then went elsewhere, or else I was unlucky, for they took man after man from different places without ever once giving me a chance of a shot at them. This constant night watching was most dreary and fatiguing work, but I felt that it was a duty that had to be undertaken, as the men naturally looked to me for protection. In the whole of my life I have never experienced anything more nerve-shaking than to hear the deep roars of these dreadful monsters growing gradually nearer and nearer, and to know that someone or other of us was doomed to be their victim before the morning dawned. Once they reached the vicinity of the camps, the roars completely ceased, and we knew they were stalking their prey. Shouts would then pass from camp to camp, "*Khabar dar, bhaieon, shaitan ata!*" (Beware, brothers, the devil is coming!), but the warning cries would prove of no avail, and sooner or later agonizing shrieks would break the silence and another man would be missing from roll-call next morning.

I have a very vivid recollection of one particular night when the brutes seized a man from the railway station and brought him close to my camp to devour. I could plainly hear them crunching the bones, and the sound of their dreadful purring filled the air and rang in my ears for days afterwards. The terrible thing was to feel so helpless; it was useless to attempt to go out, as of course the poor fellow was dead, and in addition it was so pitch dark as to make it impossible to see anything. Some half a dozen workmen, who lived in a small enclosure close to mine, became so terrified on hearing the lions at their meal that they shouted and implored me to allow them to come inside my *boma*. This I willingly did, but soon afterwards I remembered that one man had been lying ill in their



camp, and on making inquiry I found that they had callously left him behind alone. I immediately took some men with me to bring him to my *boma*, but on entering his tent I saw by the light of the lantern that the poor fellow was beyond need of safety. He had died of shock at being deserted by his companions.

From this time on matters gradually became worse. Almost every morning some workmen or other would come to my tent to tell me of a raid he had witnessed when one of his comrades had been carried off. One day an Indian artisan who had been acting as watchman came to my tent, still shivering with fear, to report what had occurred during the night. In the early hours of the morning, he said, he was sitting on top of a high pile of wooden sleepers when he saw the man-eater, silent as a ghost, emerge from the jungle, and stalk toward a truck where some of his comrades were sleeping. Instantly he gave a warning cry, shouting as loudly as possible and at the same time rattling some empty kerosene tins which he had with him for the purpose. On hearing the noise, the lion dived for cover under some wagons. The startled workmen jumped up and looked round in all directions but could see no trace of the man-eater. The brute had quietly slipped under a train, the engine of which happened to be taking water at a siding, and presently the watchman saw him standing in front of an open car in which a sick engineer, on his way to the coast, was lying. The man-eater was just gathering himself for a spring at the invalid, when the fireman by a lucky chance threw some slag out of his fire-box on to a heap of rails that happened to be stacked there, and this scared the brute away for the moment.

He presently reappeared, however, beside the truck in which the workmen whom he had first stalked were lying and, before the watchman had time to utter another warning cry, he had leaped in amongst them

and seized his victim. Shaking the unfortunate man as a terrier would a rat, he carried him off shrieking, and devoured him not two hundred yards away in the depths of the gloomy jungle.

Hitherto as a rule, only one of the man-eaters had made the attack and had done the foraging, while the other waited outside in the bush; but now they began to change their tactics, entering the *bomas* together and each seizing a victim. In this way two Swahili porters were killed, one being immediately carried off and devoured. The other was heard moaning for a long time, and when his terrified companions at last summoned up sufficient courage to go to his assistance, they found him stuck fast in the bushes of the *boma*, through which for once the lion had apparently been unable to drag him. He was still alive when I saw him next morning, but so terribly mauled that he died before he reached the hospital.

Within a few days of this, the two brutes made a most ferocious attack on the largest camp in the section, which for safety's sake was situated within a stone's throw of Tsavo Station and close to a Permanent Way Inspector's iron hut. Suddenly in the dead of night, the two man-eaters burst in among the terrified workmen, and even from my *boma*, some distance away, I could plainly hear the panic-stricken shrieking of the coolies. Then followed cries of "They've taken him; they've taken him!" as the brutes carried off their unfortunate victim and began their horrible feast close beside the camp. The Inspector, Mr. Dalgairns, fired over fifty shots in the direction in which he heard the lions, but they were not to be frightened and calmly lay there until their meal was finished. After examining the spot in the morning, we at once set out to follow the brutes, Mr. Dalgairns feeling confident that he had wounded one of them, as there was a trail on the sand like that of the toes of a broken limb. After

some careful stalking, we suddenly found ourselves in the vicinity of the lions and were greeted with ominous growlings. Cautiously advancing and pushing the bushes aside, we saw in the gloom what we at first took to be a lion cub; closer inspection, however, showed it to be the remains of the unfortunate coolie, which the man-eaters had evidently abandoned at our approach. The legs, one arm and half of the body had been eaten, and it was the stiff fingers of the other arm trailing along the sand which had left the marks we had taken to be the trail of a wounded lion. By this time the beasts had retired far into the thick jungle where it was impossible to follow them, so we had the remains of the coolie buried and once more returned home disappointed.

Now the bravest men in the world, much less the ordinary Indian coolie, will not stand constant terrors of this sort indefinitely. The whole district was by this time thoroughly panic-stricken and I was not at all surprised, therefore, to find on my return to camp that same afternoon, that the men had all struck work and were waiting to speak to me. When I sent for them, they flocked to my *boma* in a body and told me that they would not remain at Tsavo any longer for anything or anybody; they stated that they had "come from India on an agreement *to work* for the Government, not *to supply food* for either lions or devils." No sooner had they delivered this ultimatum than a regular stampede took place. Some hundreds of them stopped the first passing train by throwing themselves prostrate on the rails in front of the engine, and then, swarming on to the flat-cars, they fled from the accursed spot.

#### ABDULLAH'S TRAGIC FATE.

After the flight of the workmen, the building of the railway in the neighborhood of Tsavo was com-

pletely stopped, and for some weeks practically nothing was done but erect "lion proof" huts for those few stout-hearted fellows who had sufficient courage to remain. It was a strange and amusing sight to see men perched on the top of water-tanks, roofs and girders—anywhere for safety. One enterprising coolie made a three story apartment on a water tank which he rented out at great profit to himself; others dug out pits inside their tents into which they descended at night, covering the top over with heavy logs of wood. Every good-sized tree in the camp had as many beds lashed to it as it would bear. I remember that one night when the camp was attacked, so many men swarmed up one particular tree that it came down with a crash, hurling its terror-stricken load of shrieking coolies close to the very lions they were trying to avoid. Fortunately for them, however, the man-eaters had already seized a victim and they were so busy devouring him that they paid no attention to anything else.

About this time I invited Mr. Whitehead, the District Officer who lived some thirty miles away, to come and assist me in my campaign against the man-eaters. He accepted the invitation and told me to expect him towards evening in time for dinner. His train was due at six o'clock, so I sent my Indian servant up to the station to meet him. In a short time he came rushing back, trembling with terror, to inform me that there was no sign of the train or of any of the railway staff, but that a big lion was walking up and down the platform. "Nonsense," I replied, "it is probably a jackal," for I did not for a moment believe his story. Everybody was in such a state of panic that, if even a squirrel had been seen on the platform, it would have been magnified into a lion. As a matter of fact I found out next morning that my servant's story was perfectly true, and both the Station Master and his men had



been obliged to take refuge from the man-eater by locking themselves in the station building.

As Whitehead did not turn up, I ate my dinner alone. During the course of the meal I heard the report of a couple of shots, but I paid no heed to them, for guns had been issued to the headmen of the gangs to scare away the lions, and shooting was a common occurrence after nightfall.

Shortly after dusk I went out and took up my position on a crib made of sleepers, perched on the end of a girder. Soon after settling down at my post, I was surprised to hear the man-eaters growling and purring and crunching up bones about seventy yards from where I was sitting. I could not understand what they had found to eat, for I had heard no commotion in the camps, and I knew by bitter experience that every meal the brutes obtained was announced by shrieks and uproar. The only conclusion I could come to was that they had pounced upon some poor unsuspecting native traveller. After a time I was able to make out their eyes glowing in the darkness, so I took as careful aim as possible and fired. The only notice they took was to carry off whatever they were eating and retire quietly over a slight ridge which hid them from my view. As soon as it was daylight, I got out of my crib and went towards the place where I had heard the growling and on the way, whom should I meet but my missing guest, Mr. Whitehead, looking very pale and ill and generally dishevelled.

"Where on earth have you come from?" I exclaimed. "Why didn't you turn up to dinner last night?"

"A nice reception you give a fellow when you invite him to dinner," was his reply.

"Why, what's up?" I asked.

"That infernal lion of yours jumped on me and nearly did for me last night," said Whitehead.

"Nonsense!" I cried in astonishment, "you must have dreamt it."

"That's not much of a dream, is it?" he asked, turning round and showing me his back.

His clothing was rent by one huge tear from the nape of his neck downwards, and on the bare flesh there were four great claw marks showing red and angry through the torn cloth.

Without further parley I hurried him off to my tent, where I bathed and dressed his wounds, and, when I had made him considerably more comfortable, I got from him the whole story of the events of the night. It appeared that his train was very late, so it was quite dark when he arrived at Tsavo station. He set out on foot along the railway to my camp, accompanied by Abdullah his sergeant of Askaris (native police), who walked close behind him carrying a lighted lantern. All went well until they were about half-way through a gloomy cutting, when the man-eater suddenly jumped down on them from the high bank, knocking Whitehead over like a ninepin and tearing his back in the manner I have described. Fortunately, however, my friend had his rifle with him and instantly fired. The flash and the loud report must have dazed the lion for a second or two, enabling Whitehead to disengage himself; but the next instant the brute pounced like lightning on the unfortunate Abdullah with whom he at once bounded up the bank and made off into the bush. All that the poor fellow could say was, "Eh, bwana, simba" (Oh, master, a lion.)

#### THE LION TRAPPED.

On the day following poor Abdullah's tragic death, the forces arrayed against the man-eaters were further increased. Mr. Farquhar, the Superintendent of Police, arrived from the coast with a score of sepoy (Indian soldiers) to assist in hunting down the lions whose

fame had by this time spread far and wide. We made elaborate plans for a combined offensive against the man-eaters and posted men on the most convenient trees near every camp. Several other officials also came up on leave to join in the chase and each of these guarded a likely spot in the same way, Mr. Whitehead sharing my post inside the crib on the girder. Also my lion trap was put into thorough working order, and two of the sepoy were installed as bait. Our preparations were quite complete by nightfall, when we took up our appointed positions.

Nothing happened until about 9 o'clock when, to my great satisfaction, the intense stillness was suddenly broken by the noise of the door of the lion trap clattering down.

"By Jove, Whitehead!" I exclaimed, "one of them is caught."

But, alas, for my hopes, the sequel proved an inglorious one. The bait-sepoy had a lamp burning inside their part of the cage, and were each armed with a Martini rifle and provided with plenty of ammunition. They had been given strict orders to shoot at once if a lion should enter the trap. Instead of doing so, however, they were so terrified when the ferocious beast rushed at them and finding himself trapped began to lash himself madly against the bars of the cage, that they completely lost their heads and were actually too unnerved to fire. Not for some minutes—not indeed until Farquhar, whose post was close by, shouted at them and cheered them on—did they at all recover themselves. Then, when at last they did begin to shoot, they shot with a vengeance, anyhow, anywhere,—except at the lion! Whitehead and I were at right angles to the direction in which they should have fired, and yet their bullets came whizzing all round us. Altogether they fired over a score of shots and in the end succeeded in blowing

away one of the bars of the cage, and through this opening the man-eater calmly walked out! How they failed to kill him several times over, is, and always will be, a complete mystery to me, for they could actually have put the muzzles of their rifles on to the lion's body.

Of course, after this fiasco, the men were more firmly convinced than ever that we were at grips with the Devil himself. We were not unduly dejected, however, and when morning dawned a hunt was at once arranged. Accordingly we spent the greater part of the day on our hands and knees endeavoring to track the lions through the dense thickets of thorny jungle, but, though we heard their growls from time to time, we never succeeded in coming up with them. Indeed, of the whole party only Farquhar managed to catch a glimpse of one as it bounded over a bush. Two more days were spent in the same manner and with equal lack of success, and then Farquhar and his sepoys were obliged to return to the coast. Mr. Whitehead also departed for his district, and once again I was left alone with the man-eaters.

#### VICTORY AT LAST.

A day or two after the departure of my allies, as I was leaving my *boma* soon after dawn, I saw a native running excitedly toward me shouting out "Simba, bwana, simba!" (The lion, master, the lion!), and every now and then looking behind him as he ran. On questioning him, I found that one of the man-eaters had tried to break into the camp by the river, but, being foiled in this, had just seized and killed a donkey and was at that moment devouring it in the jungle close at hand.

Now was my chance. I rushed for the heavy rifle which Farquhar had left me in case an opportunity such as this should arise, and then, led by the





COOLIES AT ENTRANCE OF THEIR BOMA. (See p. 12.)



TENT FROM WHICH MAN WAS TAKEN. (See p. 22.)



Swahili, I started off with the fervent hope that the Lord would deliver the man-eater into my hands. My pulse was beating much faster than usual, as I carefully stalked the dreaded beast. I crouched and crawled from bush to bush, very anxious lest I should be discovered. In a short time I had the satisfaction of hearing him crunching up the donkey's bones and then, after a further short stalk, I saw the head of the lion faintly outlined in the undergrowth, but some uncanny influence seemed to guard this demon, for, as I was taking a careful bead on him, my guide put his foot on a rotten branch, and the wary beast, hearing the noise, growled his defiance and, before I had time to press the trigger, disappeared into a patch of thick jungle.

In desperation at the thought of his escaping me once again, I ran back to camp, summoned all the available workmen and told them to bring every tom-tom, flute, tin can and other noisy instrument that could be found. As quickly as possible I posted them in a half circle as near as was safe to the spot where the lion was hiding, and gave the head *jemadar* instructions to start a simultaneous shouting and beating of the tom-toms and cans, as soon as I had time to get around to the other side. I then circled rapidly behind the lion where I found a good position beside an ant-hill which the brute was very likely to pass when he left his hiding place, for it was in the middle of a broad animal path leading straight from his lair. I knelt behind the ant-hill and waited expectantly.

Soon I heard a tremendous din being raised by the advancing workmen and, almost immediately, to my intense joy, out into the open path stepped a huge maneless lion. It was the first time, during all these trying months, that I had obtained a fair chance of a shot and my satisfaction at the prospect of bagging the man-eater was unbounded. Slowly and very

majestically he advanced along the path, stopping every few seconds to look round. I was fascinated at the sight and remained motionless as a statue. I was only partly concealed from view, and, if his attention had not been so fully occupied by the noise behind him, he must have observed me. As he was oblivious to my presence, however, I let him approach to within about fifteen yards of me and then quickly covered him with my rifle. The moment I moved the weapon, he caught sight of me and seemed very much astonished at my sudden appearance, for he stuck his forefeet into the ground, threw himself back on his haunches, opened his jaws wide and growled savagely. As I sighted the rifle on his brain I felt that, at last, I had him absolutely at my mercy but—never trust an untried weapon! I pressed the trigger and, to my horror, heard the dull snap that tells of a misfire! Fortunately for me the lion was so distracted by the terrific din and uproar made by the coolies behind him that instead of springing upon me as I expected, he bounded aside into the jungle and once more escaped. Bitterly did I anathematise the hour in which I had relied upon a borrowed weapon, and in my vexation I abused owner, maker, and rifle with fine impartiality.

After this dismal failure there was, of course, nothing to do but return to camp. Before doing so, however, I proceeded to view the dead donkey which I found to have been only partly eaten at the quarters. It is a curious fact that lions always begin at the tail end of their prey and eat upwards toward the head. As his meal had thus been interrupted, evidently at the very beginning, I felt pretty sure that the hungry brute would return to the carcass at nightfall. Accordingly, as there was no suitable tree close at hand, I had a staging erected some ten feet away from the dead animal. This *machan* was about twelve feet high



and was composed of four poles stuck into the ground and inclined toward each other at the top, where a plank was lashed to serve as a seat. Further, as the nights were still pitch dark, I had the donkey's carcass secured by strong wires to a neighboring stump, so that the lion might not be able to drag it away before I could get a shot at him.

At sundown I took up my position on the flimsy perch and, much to the disgust of my gun-bearer, Mahina, I decided to go alone. I would gladly have taken him with me, indeed, but he had a bad cough and I was afraid lest he should make any involuntary noise or movement which might spoil all. Darkness fell almost immediately and everything became extraordinarily still. The silence of an African jungle on a dark night needs to be experienced to be realized. It is most impressive, especially when one is absolutely alone and isolated from his kind. The solitude and stillness, and the purpose of my vigil, all had their effect on me, and from a condition of strained expectancy, I gradually fell into a dreamy mood which harmonized well with my surroundings. Suddenly I was startled out of my reverie by the snapping of a twig, and, straining my ears for a further sound, I fancied that I could hear the rustling of a large body forcing its way through the bush. "The Man-eater!" I thought to myself, "surely tonight my luck will change and I shall bag one of the brutes." Profound silence again followed. I sat on my perch like a statue, every nerve tense with excitement. Very soon all doubt as to the presence of the man-eater was dispelled. A deep long-drawn sigh—sure sign of hunger—came up from the bushes, and the rustling commenced again, as he cautiously advanced. In a moment or two a sudden stop, followed by an angry growl, told me that my presence had been noticed, and I began to fear that disappointment awaited me once more. But no;

events now took a turn which made my blood run cold, for, instead of either making off, or coming for his kill, the lion began stealthily to stalk *me*!

For about two hours he horrified me by slowly creeping round and round my crazy structure, gradually edging his way nearer and nearer. Every moment I expected him to rush the staging; and it had not been constructed with an eye to such a possibility. If one of the rather flimsy poles should break, or if the lion could spring the twelve feet which separated me from the ground . . . the thought was not a pleasant one. I remember saying to myself, "There is a dead donkey down there, but if ever there was a real live one, here he sits." I began to feel distinctly "creepy" and heartily repented my folly in having placed myself all alone in such a dangerous position. I kept perfectly still, hardly daring even to blink my eyes, but the long continued strain began to tell on my nerves; and my feelings can better be imagined than described, when just about midnight something came flop and hit me on the back of the head. For a moment I was so terrified that I nearly fell off the plank, for I thought that the lion had sprung on me from behind. Regaining my senses in a second or two, I realized that I had been hit by nothing more formidable than an owl, which had doubtless mistaken me for the branch of a tree. Not a very alarming thing to happen in ordinary circumstances, I admit, but coming at the time it did, it almost paralyzed me. The involuntary start, which I could not help giving, was immediately answered by a sinister growl from below. After this I again kept as still as I could, though by this time I was actually trembling with excitement and nerves. In a short time I heard the lion begin to creep toward me. I could barely make out his form, as he crouched among the whitish undergrowth, but I saw enough for my purpose, and before he could come

any nearer I took careful aim and fired. The sound of the shot was at once followed by a terrific roar and then I could hear him leaping about in all directions. I was no longer able to see him, for his first bound had taken him into the thick bush, but, to make assurance doubly sure, I kept blazing away in the direction in which I heard him plunging about. At length came a series of mighty groans, gradually subsiding into deep sighs, and finally ceasing altogether, and I then knew that one of the "devils" who had so long harried us would trouble us no more.

As soon as I ceased firing, a tumult of enquiring voices was borne across the dark jungle from the men in camp about quarter of a mile away. I shouted back that I was safe and sound and that the lion was dead. Whereupon such a mighty cheer went up from all the camps as must have frightened the denizens of the jungle for miles around. Soon I saw scores of lights twinkling through the bushes. Every man in camp turned out, and, with tom-toms beating and horns blowing came running to the scene. They surrounded my perch, and—to my amazement—prostrated themselves on the ground before me, saluting me with cries of "Mabarak! Mabarak!" which means "Blessed one" or "Saviour." I refused to allow any search for the body of the lion to be made, in case he might possibly be shamming dead. Accordingly we all returned in triumph to the camp, where great rejoicings were kept up for the remainder of the night, the Swahili and other African natives celebrating the occasion by an exceptionally wild and savage dance.

For my part, I anxiously awaited the dawn, and even before it was thoroughly light, I was on my way to the eventful spot, for I could not completely persuade myself even yet that "the devil" might not have eluded me in some uncanny and mysterious way. Happily my fears proved groundless, and I was greatly

relieved to find that my luck—after playing me so many exasperating tricks—had really turned at last. I had scarcely traced the blood for more than a few paces when, on rounding a bush, I was startled to see a huge lion right in front of me, seemingly alive and crouching for a spring. On looking closer, however, I satisfied myself that he was really and truly stone dead, whereupon my followers crowded round, laughed and danced and shouted with joy like children, and bore me in triumph shoulder-high round the dead body. When these thanksgiving ceremonies were over, I examined my trophy and found that it was indeed one to be proud of. His length from tip of nose to tip of tail was nine feet eight inches; he stood three feet, nine inches high, and it took eight men to carry him back to camp. On examining his head, I found that a .303 bullet had smashed out one of his tusks, for the track of the bullet was left in the tooth stump. I must have given him a bad toothache the night he attacked Brock and myself in the freight car.

#### THE END OF THE MAN-EATERS.

It must not be imagined that with the death of this lion our troubles at Tsavo were at an end; his companion was still at large, and very soon began to make us unpleasantly aware of the fact. Only a few nights elapsed before he made an attempt to get at the Permanent Way Inspector, climbing up the steps of his bungalow and prowling round the verandah. Mr. Dalgairns, hearing the noise and thinking it was a drunken coolie, shouted angrily, "Go away!" but, fortunately for him, did not attempt to come out or to open the door. Thus disappointed in his attempt to obtain a meal of human flesh, the lion seized a couple of the Inspector's goats and devoured them there and then.



On hearing of this occurrence, I determined to sit up the next night near the Inspector's bungalow. Fortunately there was a vacant iron shanty close at hand, with a convenient loophole in it for firing from; and outside this I placed three full-grown goats as bait, tying them to a half length of rail, weighing about 250 lbs. The night passed uneventfully until just before daybreak, when at last the lion turned up, pounced on one of the goats and made off with it, at the same time dragging away the others, rail and all. I fired several shots in his direction, but it was pitch dark and quite impossible to see anything, so I only succeeded in hitting one of the goats.

Next morning I started off in pursuit and was joined by some others from the camp. The trail of the goats and rail was easily followed, and we soon came up, about a quarter of a mile away, to where the lion was still busy at his meal. He was concealed in some thick scrub and growled angrily on hearing our approach; finally, as we got closer, he suddenly made a charge, rushing through the bushes at a great pace. In an instant, every man of the party scrambled hastily up the nearest tree, with the exception of one of my assistants, Mr. Winkler, who stood steadily by me throughout. The brute, however, did not press his charge home; and on throwing stones into the bushes where we had last seen him, we guessed by the silence that he had slunk off. We, therefore, advanced cautiously, and, on getting up to the place, discovered that he had indeed escaped us, leaving two of the goats scarcely touched.

Thinking that in all probability the lion would return as usual to finish his meal, I had a very strong scaffolding put up a few feet away from the dead goats, and took up my position on it before dark. On this occasion I brought my gun-bearer, Mahina, to take a turn at watching, as I was by this time worn



out for want of sleep, having spent so many nights on the lookout. I was just dozing off comfortably, when suddenly I felt my arm seized, and, on looking up, saw Mahina pointing in the direction of the goats. "Sher!" (Lion) was all he whispered. I grasped my smooth-bore, which I had double-charged with slug, and waited patiently. In a few moments I was rewarded, for, as I watched the spot where I expected the lion to appear, there was a rustling among the bushes, and I saw him stealthily emerge into the open and pass almost directly beneath us. I fired both barrels practically together into his shoulder, and, to my joy, could see him go down under the force of the blow. Quickly I reached for the magazine rifle, but, before I could use it, he was up again and out of sight among the bushes, and I had to fire after him quite at random. Nevertheless I was confident of getting him in the morning, and accordingly set out as soon as it was light. For over a mile there was no difficulty in following the blood trail, and, as he had rested several times, I knew that he had been badly wounded. In the end, however, my hunt proved fruitless, for after a time the traces of blood ceased and the surface of the ground became rocky, so that I was no longer able to follow the spoor.

As it happened, there was no sign of our enemy for about ten days after this, and we began to hope that he had died of his wounds in the bush. All the same we still took every precaution at night, and it was fortunate that we did so, for otherwise at least one more victim would have been added to the list. I was suddenly aroused one night by terrified shouts from my trolley men, who slept in a tree close outside my *boma*; they were crying out that the lion was trying to get at them. It would have been madness to have gone out, as the moon was hidden by dense clouds and it was absolutely impossible to see any-

thing more than a yard ahead, so all I could do was to fire off a few rounds just to frighten the brute away. This apparently had the desired effect, for the men were not further molested that night; but the man-eater had evidently prowled about for some time, for we found in the morning that he had gone right into every one of their tents, and round the tree was a regular ring of his footmarks.

The following evening I took up my position in this same tree, in the hope that he would make another attempt. The night began badly, for, while climbing up to my perch, I very nearly put my hand on a venomous snake which was lying coiled round one of the branches. As may be imagined, I came down again very quickly, but one of my men managed to despatch it with a long pole. Fortunately the night was clear and cloudless, and the moon made everything almost as bright as day. I kept watch until about 2 A. M., when I roused Mahina to take his turn. For about an hour I slept peacefully with my back to the tree, and then woke suddenly with an uncanny feeling that something was wrong. Mahina, however, was on the alert, and had seen nothing; and, although I looked carefully round us on all sides, I too could discover nothing unusual. Only half satisfied, I was about to lie back again, when I fancied I saw something move a little way off among the low bushes. On gazing intently at the spot for a few seconds, I found I was not mistaken. It was the man-eater, cautiously stalking us.

The ground was fairly open round our tree, with only a small bush here and there; and from our position it was a most fascinating sight to watch this great brute stealing stealthily round us, taking advantage of every bit of cover as he came. His skill showed that he was an old hand at the terrible game of man-hunting, so I determined to run no undue risk

of losing him this time. Accordingly I waited until he got quite close—about twenty yards away—and then fired my .303 at his chest. I heard the bullet strike him, but unfortunately it had no knockdown effect, for, with a fierce growl, he turned and made off with great long bounds. Before he disappeared from sight, however, I managed to have three more shots at him from the magazine rifle, and another growl told me that the last of these had also taken effect.

We awaited daylight with impatience, and at the first glimmer of dawn set out to hunt him down. I took a native tracker with me, so that I was free to keep a good lookout, while Mahina followed immediately behind with a Martini carbine. Splashes of blood being plentiful, we were able to get along quickly and we had not proceeded more than a quarter of a mile through the jungle when suddenly a fierce warning growl was heard right in front of us. Looking cautiously through the bushes, I could see the man-eater glaring out in our direction, and showing his tusks in an angry snarl. I at once took careful aim and fired. Instantly he sprang out and made a most determined charge down on us. I fired again and knocked him over, but in a second he was up once more and coming for me as fast as he could in his crippled condition. A third shot had no apparent effect, so I put out my hand for the Martini hoping to stop him with the heavy lead bullet. To my horror, however, the rifle was not there. The terror of the sudden charge had proved too much for Mahina, and both he and the carbine were by this time well on their way up a tree. In the circumstances there was nothing to do but follow suit, which I did without loss of time, and, but for the fact that one of my shots had broken a hind leg, the brute would most certainly have seized me. Even as it was, I had barely time

to swing myself up out of his reach before he arrived at the foot of the tree.

When the lion found he was too late, he started to limp back to the thicket; but by this time I had taken the carbine from Mahina, and the first shot I fired from it seemed to give him his quietus, for he fell over and lay motionless. Rather foolishly I at once scrambled down from the tree and walked up to him. To my surprise and no little alarm he jumped up and attempted another charge. This time, however, a Martini bullet in the chest and another in the head finished him; he dropped in his tracks not five yards away from me, and died gamely, biting savagely at a branch which had fallen to the ground.

By this time all the workmen in camp, attracted by the sound of the firing, had arrived on the scene, and so great was their resentment against the brute who had killed and devoured such numbers of their comrades that it was only with the greatest difficulty that I could restrain them from tearing the dead body to pieces. Eventually, amid the wild rejoicings of the natives and coolies, I had the lion carried to my *boma*, which was close at hand. On examination, we found no less than six bullet holes in the body, and embedded only a little way in the flesh of the back was the slug which I had fired into him from the scaffolding about ten days previously. As in the case of his companion, the skin was deeply scored all over by the thorns of the *bomas* through which he had to force his way in order to get at his victims.

The news of the death of the second "devil" soon spread far and wide over the country, and natives actually travelled from up and down the line to have a look at my trophies and at the "devil-killer", as they called me. Best of all, the coolies who had absconded came flocking back to Tsavo, and, much to my relief, work was resumed, the bridge was completed and we

were never again troubled by man-eaters. It was amusing, indeed, to notice the change which took place in the attitude of the workmen toward me after I had killed the two lions. Instead of wishing to murder me, as they once did, they now could not do enough for me, and, as a token of their gratitude, they presented me with a beautiful silver bowl, as well as with a long poem written in Hindustani describing all our trials and my ultimate victory.

J. H. PATTERSON.

Iver, Bucks, England.  
September, 1925.



Map of Africa showing location of Tsavo.





THE FIRST MAN-EATER KILLED. (See p. 33.)



TREE FROM WHICH SECOND LION WAS SHOT. (See p. 37.)





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